

May 4, 2016

Travel documents for studying in the United States

Question: *My old passport has already expired. My visa to travel to the United States is still valid but it is in my expired passport. Do I need to apply for a new visa with my new passport? I don't want to have any trouble when I travel, but I also don't want to have to spend the time and money on a new visa if I don't need it.*

Not a problem at all. If your visa is still valid you can travel to the United States with your two passports, as long as the visa is valid (not expired), not damaged, and is the appropriate type of visa required for your principal purpose of travel. (Example: tourist visa, when your principal purpose of travel is tourism). Both passports (the new one and the old one with the visa) should be from the same country and type (Example: both are Jamaican regular passports, or both are official passports, etc.).

When you arrive at the U.S. port-of-entry (POE), generally an airport or land border) the Customs and Border Protection Immigration Officer will check your visa in the old passport and if s/he decides to admit you into the United States they will stamp your new passport with an admission stamp along with the annotation "VIOPP" (visa in other passport). Do not try to remove the visa from your old passport and stick it into the new valid passport! (Yes, people have tried to do this.) If you do so, your visa will no longer be valid and you will have to apply again.

So, take both passports on your trip, and enjoy your travels!

You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, www.kingston.usembassy.gov and the website of our authorized service provider at www.usvisa-info.com. Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages. You may also send your questions to: editorial@jamaicaobserver.com to be forwarded to the embassy.

Reminder, Your appointment time is your arrival time, NOT your interview time. Do not show up earlier than your appointment time.